

THE RETURN ISSUE -- TWO YEARS IN THE MAKING

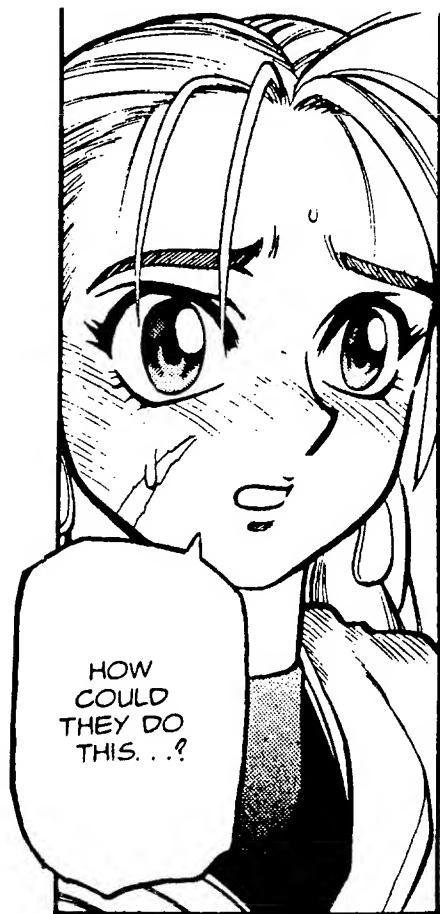
Industry News • Fandom • Game Reviews • Editorials

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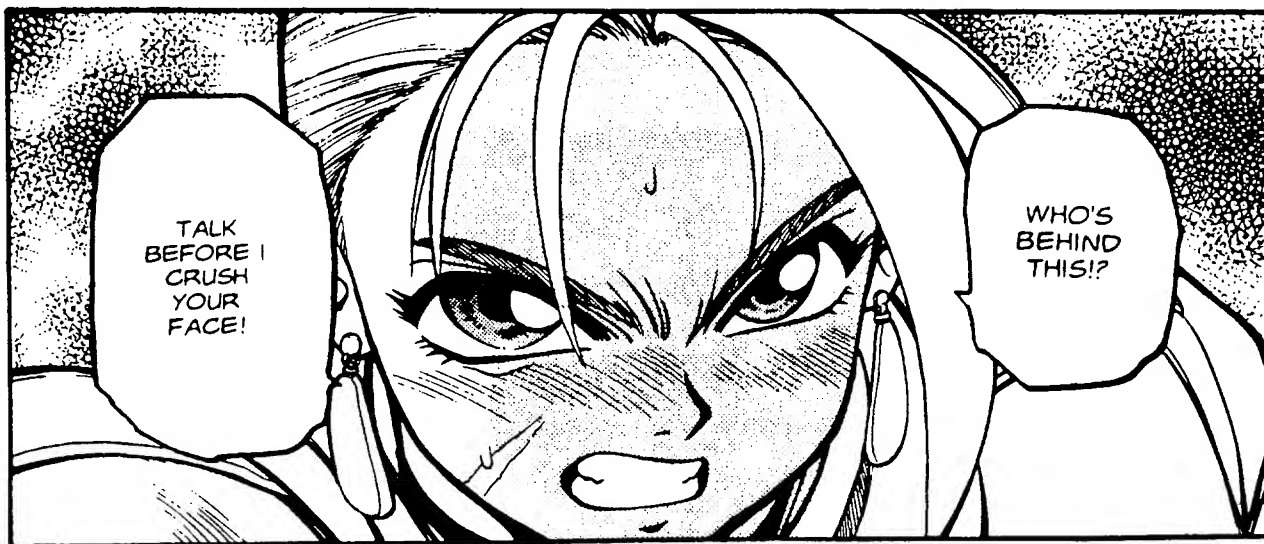
Issue #18

Features in This Issue:

- An E3 show report from the L.A. Convention Center
- The futures of T*HQ and Acclaim -- what to expect
- Commentary on fandom and the gaming industry



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Game reviews including Wipeout XL,
Super Mario 64, Virtua Fighter Kids,
Kirby Superstar, and Baku Baku!





editors' Welcome

from Jason Whitman

The Return of Paradox: Rebirth, Resurrection and Survival

The lives of successful publications, either independent or professional, are rarely marked by a two-year period of inactivity, but Paradox is somehow returning after such a hiatus in this eighteenth issue.

I would never suggest that Paradox has been successful, for while we enjoyed publishing the previous seventeen issues, there was always a greater goal of sometimes being published on a larger scale. My fellow staff member Chris Johnston has since done that, contributing for EGM, writing his own book about the Sony PlayStation and becoming a contributing editor for Intelligent Gamer's Fusion, now known simply as Intelligent Gamer.

I openly admit my jealousy, and realize that the return of Paradox has come about with me hoping that it will become the fun publication it once was. For myself it was about bringing back those old times -- long nights writing and rewriting issues, salvaging a few more pages when there was no material left to print, and late night visits to Kinko's -- but also about establishing a foundation on which we can illustrate our enjoyment for the hobby of video gaming, because it seems that professional magazines can at times lack any sort of passion for their subject matter.

I have had this happen myself, for working on a college newspaper showed me that while reporting and writing was fun, there was little of myself in what I created, and I think any faned who has been involved in school or professional publications has at times said the same thing. What satisfaction could be found in seeing my name on the front page was lost in the realization that what I had written has merely a compilation of what other people had said -- I was not a writer but an editor and compiler of quotes and anecdotes that were not my own.

So Paradox is back, at least for a summer, as college life has been the biggest obstacle to getting this issue published, and it has previously existed in many forms. For me, this issue is about making video games fun again -- the business of gaming is everywhere -- yet the enjoyment seems to be gone. I want to have a passion for the hobby and for this publication, and I would like to see video game fandom revived, because the pro mags seem to be in a rut that limits what we can be told -- the power of advertising and what it can do to a game review is amazing -- I understand the publishing business, but I don't like it very much.

So all I ask is that you enjoy this eighteenth issue of Paradox. If you like it or hate it, tell us! Contribute an article or send an e-mail message, because I'd like to see gaming and fandom be fun again for everyone.

PARADOX

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All articles and reviews are accepted and most are published, so please contribute!

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File Under Hiatus

The art on the cover is from the Super Street Fighter II: Cammy comic first published in the Japanese publication Shonen Sunday Comics Special and later in the new American magazine Game On!. © Capcom/Masahiko Nakahira, 1994 and Capcom Co., Ltd., 1995.

The other selection comes from the Samurai Spirits manga in Japan, which also first appeared in Shonen Sunday Comic Special and in the first issue of Game On! here in the states. © SNK, 1994 and SNK/Kyoichi Nanatsuki/Yuki Miyoshi, 1995.

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*Help keep Paradox and the independent publishing world alive.
Keep copies circulating.*

from Chris Johnston

Welcome Back, Kotter!

Finally, the E3 is over, and we're back to reality here . . . if only for a little while. You see, with all that's happening now in the gaming industry, I doubt that there will be much time to settle down from the show before things pick up again. The Nintendo 64 comes out in Japan in a little over a month, Sega's Internet Adapter comes out very soon, and the U.S. launch of the N64 is only a few months away. It's an exciting time to be in this industry.

Let's start talking about the show though, because that is the major event for the month. There were surprises, both expected and baffling, including Sega's rather lackluster showing of anything new or exciting. There was Nintendo's amazing Mario 64, and the absence of any mention of the word "3DO" or "M2." The buzz was on the Internet, with almost every single producer of electronic entertainment having some sort of setup so that attendees could check out the company's web page.

Buzzwords were everywhere. Without stepping into a booth, the words interactive and multimedia slapped you in the face. Things were new, better, faster, improved, and 3D, but every game that I played had that same basic feel to it -- with the exception of Mario 64. Innovations that were exhibited weren't necessarily "new" or different, but it was a new presentation. Arcade conversions abounded, from Virtua Cop 2 to Mortal Kombat Trilogy, everything survived the jump.

One has to wonder just where we're headed with all of this new technology. Are we any better off than we were in the days of the Genesis and SNES? Have we really advanced that much, or is everything that's presented as new just a rehash of a common winning formula. You'll see more commentary in my E3 analysis in this issue. All I can say right now was that it was a great show, and I'm looking forward to next year already!

TAPPING THE SOURCE

Contact industry leaders on their own World Wide Web pages:

www.nintendo.com -- Nintendo Power online

www.sega.com -- Saturn and Genesis info online

www.sony.com -- Get all the PlayStation facts and figures

www.apple.pippin.com -- Dead in the water, but still online

www.toad.net -- If you're still an Atari supporter, Toad is for you

www.nuke.com -- New owners, but an informative page by Sendai

The Industry

E3: A New Show with a New Attitude

WITH A MORE ADULT ATMOSPHERE THAN CES, E3 SUCCEEDS

by Jason Whitman

Paradox Head Staff

The summer CES shows that were held for many years near my home in Chicago were always interesting adventures. I would have hoped that they were as such because of great new games or by meeting interesting people, but that unfortunately wasn't the case.

The way of the CES in 1992 through 1994 was simple -- appear in a coat and tie, look older, kiss a lot of public relations rear, and be respected -- anything less would leave you being ignored and the recipient of dirty looks.

The Power of Youth

More the detriment of it when it came to attending a CES, for harassment was abound for anyone even resembling less than 18 years old. Forget about who belonged and who didn't, ignore those with real credentials because we simply appeared too young to belong at such a place.

Such was the contradiction of those shows. If you looked professional but lacked any affiliation with the industry at all, you could enter without any trouble whatsoever. Be dressed in jeans, however, and maybe appear younger than the typi-

cal corporate bigwig or public relations robot, and your presence at the show was questioned and your show pass possibly taken away.

Learn from Experience

After being harassed by show security, forced into signing a waiver of liability, and creating elaborate lies, we came to the conclusion that the way to make it at these shows was to dress "appropriately." Chris chose to go shirt and tie, and I wore a nicer selection of clothing as well. Were we recognized by public relations assistants or fellow members of the press? Rarely, and only then for stories about "some kids doing a little video game newsletter."

Those were the times, when young journalists, amateurs I grant you, but amateurs who bought systems and games, would be ignored in favor of a man in a three piece suit with no knowledge or interest in the industry. Many people attended on "visitor" passes and had nothing to do with such electronic industries at all, but merely attended because they had connections and "wanted to check out the new car stereos."

A New Era

With the onset of E3, there are no car stereos to "check out," because this is electronic entertainment only, this is our show now.

Here public relations people know who buy their systems and play their games, because they've studied the demographics. They know that pro magazines aren't made up of older men in suits, but younger adults who play games and might just wear jeans and a T-shirt when they do so.

Getting Along

E3 didn't involve any harassment -- both security and company representatives were very generous and open -- for they understood who belonged, and it wasn't based on looks, but the fact that we had passes around our necks. That was enough, just as it always should have been with the EIA and CES shows.

Jokes often filled the halls of the Los Angeles Convention Center during E3 about the Summer CES in Orlando, and how there was nothing there to see anymore. How true, since almost all gaming manufacturers and distributors have defected to E3. And rightfully so, because it seems that we weren't understood at CES, that in the electronic entertainment industries, it's not about who looks like they belong, because everybody belongs. Like what is often said about baseball, it's grown men playing a kids' game. But some kids still play video games, and even more today are writing about them in print and Internet publications. Luckily, with the dawn of E3, these young journalists will be recognized.

Los Angeles, 1996. A war zone, a battlefield, and a convention center. Not having been to a video gaming show in two years, this was really a new experience. I hadn't been privy to the kind of propaganda that companies shoot out during this time, and coming back to it was a new experience. For one thing, being many miles from home cut down on the sheer amount of junk and paraphernalia that I could bring back from the show. A total of two bags came back with me, filled to the brim with E3 press kits and free goodies from the show. I cut back on collecting junk, which I used to do at CES.

Sega's showing was disappointing. Granted, they did have good stuff, but it wasn't as much of a shocker as with previous years. Next to Nintendo's stellar showing, Sega looked like old hat. What Sega put out on the show floor was nothing more than a handful of arcade translations and sequels. Each one has been seen before, and each one lacked the kind of originality or inventiveness that they'll need to get ahead of Sony and Nintendo this year. I couldn't even judge Sonic X-Treme, the first Sonic Saturn excursion, because the only playable portion was a small bonus level. The demo of the game looked promising, however in my opinion Sonic looks better as a 2-D game. Without the original team working on it, it'll be interesting to see if Sega can really shake Sonic back into winning form.

The analog controller touted for use with Nights, Sega's premier 3D game by the creator of the original Sonic the Hedgehog, looked like a blatant ripoff of Nintendo's superior analog controller, partially because of the way it was used in Nights. Nights is touted as a 3D game, however what they had at the show was anything but real 3D. The game is linear, and in the flying sequences, it's not even a 3D game but a glorified 2D side-scroller. What they had at the show looked promising, but it still needs to be tweaked. If it is to "astound everyone" as Sega's literature says, it will have to be a lot better, especially to compete with Mario 64. Since Nights will be released around the same time (or a little before Mario), Sega's going to have to put all that much more effort into Nights in order to make it a hit.

The sheer number of expected titles, or better yet arcade translations and sequels was astounding. Too many of them in my opinion, because if Sega is to take on Nintendo, they're going to need original home games in order to compete, and they can't put everything into arcade titles. You'd of thought it was an arcade trade show with the amount of coin-op machines they had running in their booth. Fighting Vipers, Virtual On, Manx TT, Virtua Fighter 3 and others were all announced and on the floor in their arcade form, but nowhere to be found on the Saturn in even a pre-release or pre-alpha form. It was sickening to see all the arcade machines promised to be on the Saturn this year with no proof. I want to see Sega produce a faithful representation of VF3 on the Saturn, because I don't honestly think it can be done. If they pull it off, it'll be a major coup for them. But the question is,

Continued, please see E3, page 6

Video Games

E3 *continued from page 5*

when the N64 comes out, will anyone really care?

What did Sega have that was original? Good question. Nights, of course, is original and it looks promising with the exceptions of the slight drawbacks mentioned above. Some people raved about it, others thought it was just "good," I think it has potential to be either fantastic or just good. Either way, it's going to be a major part of Sega's N64 destruction crew, if it can be assembled in time. From what I saw of Mr. Bones (which wasn't much), it looked neat, but who knows if a side-scroller with a skeleton can be a major hit. Will the kids buy into it?

Most of my time at Sega was spent in front of Baku Baku, an over-looked puzzle game that was shown for all of Sega's platforms, with the notable exception of the Genesis. Many people passed it off as simply another puzzle game, but I thought that it was much more addictive than Nintendo's Tetris Attack, and is possibly one of the more original puzzlers in recent memory. Add to that a nice 3D rendered intro on the Saturn version, and you've got a decent puzzle game that has potential. I spent about a half hour at it the first day of the show, because no one else was giving it a chance (plus you could sit down while playing). If you don't hear much about this one, don't be surprised.

It came as a mild shock to me that Sega has all of a sudden completely scrapped the TruVideo concept they used to uphold so excitedly. In years past, Tomcat Alley, Double Switch and the like were touted as major interactive bombshells, but this year it was evident that Full Motion Video gaming was dropped like a lead ball. I was expecting Digital Pictures to at least have something on

the floor, either at Sega or Acclaim, but they were nowhere to be found. I for one am glad that FMV has died. Although no one seems to have noticed . . . maybe they're too busy playing Street Fighter Alpha 2 . . . but enough about that for now.

Sega brought sequels to the show, including the amazing Panzer Dragoon II Zwei, which improves on the original in terms of both graphical and gameplay elements. Bug! is back in an all new adventure from the guys at Realtime Associates. It should be interesting to see if this one is met with as much anticipation with Sonic to be released around the same time. PlayStation titles also showed up via Saturn, including both Destruction Derby and Wipeout. Wipeout was impressive, although sacrificing both resolution and frame rate in the translation from the PlayStation. Sega also came packed with a variety of sports titles, not worth going into right now, but they did have them. Since I'm not much of a sports gamer, I left them alone.

A lot of Genesis titles appeared at the show, a surprise, considering that by some standards 16-bit is all but dead. However the impressive Vectorman (Why-can't-Sega-just-bring-me-to-the-Saturn-or-are-they-pulling-a-Kirby) 2 was shown and it looked very good. Sonic Blast (labeled wrongly by Game Fan as Sonic 4) was a neat little Sonic game reminiscent of Marble Madness with Sonic gameplay elements also added for variety. Virtua Fighter Animation was shown, but one has to wonder what the hell is up with that? VF for the Genesis as a 2D fighting game has got to lose something. Plus, it'll look like crap and pull the whole VF name down with it (O.K., so I'm exaggerating). But, finally one of the outcomes of that Sega/Atari deal has shown through. Arcade Classics appeared, including Missile Command,

Centipede, and yes, PONG on one cart. One has to wonder how many megs this cart truly takes up and is the price justified. It's a neat game that I may pick up against my better judgment, but oh well.

Perhaps the neatest gadget at the show, but also not the greatest thing in the world was Sega's Net Link. The idea is perfect: a simple, inexpensive way to get onto the internet and use basic functions like the world wide web and e-mail. However, through a television, the gifs and graphics of the web look like crap. That aside, it's a 28.8 modem (hey, it's faster than the one I have on my Mac), and can be hooked up to any SLIP/PPP provider. The only thing that has yet-to-be determined for the Net Link is will it support on-line gaming. We shall see in the coming months . . .

Besides having the best rest stop on the show floor in the form of a free bar, Sony sported many new titles, including a plethora of sports games that were mildly impressive (even for me, the sports-ignorant gamer). Sony showed everything, including a black hobbyist PlayStation sold only in Japan that allows Japanese gaming enthusiasts to create their own PS games with the tools provided. It hooks up to a PC, and looked like it could really have potential to break the hobbyist-programmed games market wide open. Why won't they bring this machine here!! Why!?

Sony had Crash Bandicoot, the much-hyped action platformer starring, ohmigosh could it be, Sony's new pseudo mascot. Looking like Taz-Mania on the SNES (follow the leader perspective), it has some promise. Plus, it's on an already established system that just might have a chance against Mario 64 come fall. 2Extreme (minus ESPN license) looks interesting, but crashed on Jason and I as we were playing. All of SNK's titles on the PS looked amazing, and loaded up really quickly, considering

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Continued on next page

the load time of Street Fighter Alpha.

Attendees were encouraged to enter the Crash Bandicoot sweepstakes, and go around and play five of Sony's newest titles and grab a t-shirt in the process (in fact, I'm wearing mine as I type this). Another of the freebies was a nice Sony PlayStation badge holder, much better quality than the Konami one given to attendees as they picked up their badges. Sony had a sports bar up above the show floor, where people could sit down and relax for a while and check out Sony's sports lineup which included NFL GameDay '97, MLB Pennant Race, NCAA Football GameBreaker, NBA Shootout, and NHL FaceOff '97. When leaving the sports bar, one could grab a PlayStation shot glass, which are now part of my just-started collection. Sony came up just behind Nintendo for excellent freebies.

Fighting games are overrated, but Tobal No. 1, Square's first step into the genre, looked very promising. With fast action and a number of nice combination moves and easy to use interface, this could just give Virtua Fighter a run for its money. Which would be amazing since Tobal looks to be a PlayStation only title. An easy to pick up fighter that will please a lot of people once it's released.

There were sequels there too, including Jumping Flash 2, Twisted Metal 2, and the amazing amazing amazing WipeOut XL. Speaking of Psygnosis, they had an excellent showing of their new titles, including WipeOut XL and Destruction Derby 2, the sequels to previous PlayStation hits, Monster Truck Rally, Sentient, Tenka, and Formula 1. Psygnosis also had a huge tunnel that was made up to look like a tire. Inside TVs lined the walls presenting the company's new titles for '96. It was a very impressive showing for them overall with their recent split from Sony Computer Entertainment.

Namco had a surprising number of titles, including Ridge Racer Revolution and the NeGcon controller. They also had Tekken 2, the first two

Namco Museum volumes (which included Pac-Man and Super Pac-Man, my personal favorites), Soul Edge, and Galaxian 3.

Nintendo easily walks away with the honor of being the company with the most new stuff this year. They had the N64, the only new hardware system being introduced at the show. When we got to the show on Wednesday during the time everyone was still setting up, we were able to catch first-hand glimpses of the new Mario title. Playing it on Thursday morning before the show officially opened was also neat. The game itself looks deceiving from screen shots that you'll see in the mags. It's a game that you really have to see or play to believe. A nonlinear platform game that shows off every possible angle of the N64 hardware and shows off Nintendo's analog controller with flying colors. Originally, my thought on the controller was that it would be too complex, that I wouldn't be able to pick it up and just play like I always have with the Super Nintendo. I was completely wrong. The controller feels natural, and fits into your hand with ease. Unlike Sega's copycat controller, it's incredibly easy to get the hang of and is really reminiscent of the SNES controller while you're playing. That includes the Z button on the underside. Nintendo had several games up and running (and looking very close to complete), but with the notable absence of Starfox 64, a game that looked like it belonged on the N64 from the very beginning on the SNES. Nowhere to be found was the 64DD or Zelda 64.

Nintendo's unveiling of the N64 was a stylish exercise in public relations muscle. Howard Lincoln and Peter Main introduced the machine and took questions from the audience about it and Nintendo's future plans. Eventually, the questions got repetitive and uninteresting, and we left. One obviously smart individual referred to the SNES as the "Snezz" and from then on, both Howard and Peter referred to it as that, instead of what they had previously used,

"Sness." Buzzwords were thrown out, Shigeru Miyamoto was introduced, it was a party.

Nintendo didn't forget 16-bit either, but unlike Sega, they let 16-bit titles fall just a little bit. Introducing only a few titles, they included the third Donkey Kong Country game, Kirby's Super Star, Tetris Attack, Ken Griffey Jr. 2, and Super Mario RPG. Perhaps the other surprise was the Game Boy Pocket, a smaller GB with a higher resolution screen and less of the pea-green effect. The Virtual Boy came back, now with a price tag of under \$100, but is it really still worth it? It's a neat little gadget, but with the N64 now coming out in September, will Nintendo really put the marketing dollars behind it to make it a success? Probably not, as they're devoting \$50 million to the launch of the N64.

Over at Williams was MK Trilogy for the N64, and it looked to be very close to being finished. Fans of the series will be pleased to see that every character ever in a Mortal Kombat game is now playable, and all the backgrounds and sprites from the old games are there. It looked great, and with Acclaim putting out MK Duo (just MK I & II on one disk), it looks like this year we'll see more MK overdosing. But unlike Acclaim's product, Williams' has a great value, containing all three MKs in one game.

Nintendo also had the best freebies of the show, including an N64 backpack, N64/Shadows of the Empire reversible cap, Tetris Attack T-shirts, N64 pins and stickers, and Ken Griffey buttons. I may even be forgetting something here, but oh well. They had nice stuff. How could Sega have even expected to compete against Nintendo at this show, what with an incomplete Sonic and Nights, no new hardware, the NetLink device, and only a couple original games?

The Street Fighter 2 Alpha competition (at least Friday's) was an amazing display of talent by some of today's

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Continued, please see Show, page 8

Show *from page 7*

major magazine editors. They duked it out to see who would become the champion. Familiar names like Ben Leatherman, Tyrone Rodriguez, Lee Saito, Jer Horwitz, Andy Cockburn, Kelly Rickards, and Chris Nicolletta among others fought for the title of champ. Many of the matches were really close, including the one between Tyrone and Kelly Rickards (K. Lee of DHGF fame).

What was probably the most interesting thing about the whole competition was watching the Die Hard Game Fan staff, whose high and mighty attitude got them roars from the crowd, but the poor sportsmanship of Andy Cockburn made the entire DHGF look really bad. Not to say that Andy isn't one of the best SFA2 players around, he is. He wasted just about everyone with Zangief, not an easy task. However, his outright refusal to shake the hands of the people he beat (even when they clearly were offering their hand for him to shake), and his hysterical jumping up and down victory dance were a showing of the worst sportsmanship I've seen at a video game tournament in a long time. After losing in the final round to a member of Empire magazine's staff, his pissed off/angry look didn't help matters either. He angrily said to a Capcom employee after losing the last match, "I better have won something." A comment which I have to laugh at.

Disregarding DHGF's past record as one of the worst gaming rags out there, I'd have to say that this puts their reputation at an entirely new level. I don't care who you are, a member of the video game press or just a casual game player, sportsmanship is the pinnacle rule that we all should follow. Now I'll step down off of my soapbox. I did consider turning this little anecdote into a separate article for the longest time, but decided to let it go.

We had the luck to be able to sneak into South Hall (where all the video game companies exhibited) on Wednesday, the day before the official start of the show. After wandering the hall looking at what we'd be playing the next day, all four of us went to the GT Entertainment party. What was supposedly a party for analysts and press, became pretty much a party for analysts and the staff of Paradox, as I believe we were the only press I saw in the room during the whole time we were there. I looked around too. That night was also the night of the Nintendo and Sega parties though, where most of the video game press was probably off to, hobnobbing with the biggies.

What was different about this show was that the exhibitors were a lot more aggressive than usual. Instead of just waiting for you to wander into their booth, they were in the aisles waiting to pounce. I was stopped no less than 10 times by exhibitors begging me to check out their products. Well, ok, not begging, but they wanted me to stop in.

Other than the big three companies, the show was rather ordinary. There was the usual collection of press materials that accompanies any trade show like this, and the general shmoozing with company representatives, but the general feeling of this show was that the electronic entertainment industry is at a crossroads between multimedia and net gaming. It'll be interesting to see how it all works out in the future.

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by Chris Johnston

Paradox Head Staff

FAN FORUM

The critically-acclaimed letter column found in previous issues of Paradox could soon make a return, but only with the help of our faithful readers. Send comments or letters to any of the editors to revive our letter column!

Feature Review

Super Mario 64

Nintendo / Nintendo 64
Retail price: \$69.99

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by Jason Whitman

Paradox Head Staff

Is this the model upon which all future action games will be based? That seemed to be a common question at E3, and amongst suggestions by Nintendo executives that this game is in a league of its own, there were people playing the game that did not hesitate to agree.

As I first played this game at the show, I thought that the same old thing never looked so good or played so well. This is partially facilitated by the great analog controller of the Nintendo 64 that allows Mario to tiptoe, walk, or run based on how hard you push, but also by the wonderful 3D graphics that give the cartoony series its first taste of realism.

The views are wonderful -- from behind Mario, in front of Mario, from close up, from far away -- they're all available at the touch of a button, with quick scaling and no jerky animation. A far away view allows a player to survey the level, while a closer one allows for the close examination of details and is just plain cool to say the least.

Probably the most wonderful part of Super Mario 64 is that it breaks Mario tradition as an adventure title, similar in ways to Super Mario World and Super Mario RPG in that the linear play of the early Mario titles is long forgotten. To find the stars that allow you to exit each level, you may have to converse with enemy creatures, launch yourself from a Bullet Bill-type cannon, or utilize methods of sneak attack. It's good to see that while the games are looking more realistic, their gameplay is following suit in becoming more complex.

Outside the Lines

The Modern Video Game Evolution

MOMENTS, MOVEMENTS AND MEMOIRS IN VIDEO GAMING

by Jason Whitman

Paradox Head Staff

I remember the day when my parents bought our first Atari 2600. It was the fist run of the system, the model with the woodgrain paneling on the sides and the strange switches on the front. They were more excited about it than I was (probably because they actually knew what it was), but when we got home and my Mom and Dad popped in Combat (the pack-in game) and Space Invaders for the first time, I knew it was something special, and so did they.

But times change, and whose parents play video games anymore? I remember staying up nights with my Dad playing Space Invaders together, literally burning out our 2600's AC adapter one night after hours upon hours of River Raid, and smashing a controller to pieces after being beaten at Realsports Baseball, a game at which I claimed to be the master. I can still feel the utter excitement that filled our house the day my father went to Kay-Bee to "upgrade" to an Atari 7800. That was an amazing day, playing Pole Position II forever, stopping only for dinner, during which the conversation centered on who had gotten the highest score on which track and how many times.

I recall at age seven or eight going to my best friend's house just to watch her father play Adventure or Raiders of the Lost Ark, games I could never understand at that age. My parents used to visit the neighbors, not to play cards, but to play games together late into the night, long after the children

had gone to bed or lost interest. Video games were family-oriented then, and are so far from that now. One has to wonder what happened to games that caused so many parents to lose interest in video gaming.

I know for my family it was the game Contra for the NES. While my parents had a problem with me getting a NES in the first place (to quote my father, "What about all those Atari games, are they just going to sit there?"),

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*What existed on the Atari as
 "What do I have to do?" existed on
 the NES and in Contra as "Who do
 I have to kill," and this was far to
 real for my parents.*

this was the game that basically alienated my parents from the world of video games. I didn't really know why then, but I now realize that it was about the violence. What existed on the Atari as "What do I have to do?" existed on the NES and in Contra as "Who do I have to kill," and this was far to real for my parents. Understandably, I must add, for they were used to making blocks disappear in Breakout, not killing soldiers or seeing things explode as in Contra. Strangely, however, that is what made the NES and Contra appealing to me and most kids at the time, the supposed realism of it all. Seeing soldiers that looked like people instead of blocks and dots excited us because it seemed like real life, something we in reality knew nothing

about. Forgotten was Missile Command and its implied enemies, for we were too busy killing "for real" on the NES.

My parents were confused, my friends' parents were confused, and I think all parents just assumed that video games were advancing right past them, for the type of violence in Contra was not interesting or appealing to them, mostly because they knew the real world and didn't have to pretend to know of it on a television. But even more critical, they didn't want to, for seeing real people being killed on the news or in some cases in their own neighborhood was enough, they didn't have to watch their kids try to relive it at home.

I think another factor was the true challenge and fun that Atari games provided for parents. A bad day at work was often forgotten or overcome by my father mercilessly finishing level after level on River Raid and then bragging about his accomplishments. It was fun for them, but watching people, albeit unreal ones, come to their end on the screen only reminded them of the horrors of such a day.

Also, games on the NES could be beaten, finished, or "solved," a great buzzword of the time. My father would often ask me what fun this was, to be able to finish a game. I could never really answer him with anything but "Well yeah, but the graphics!" which I now know only proved him right. On the 2600, it was about passing the next level or beating his or her high score, not conquering the last boss and thus technically ending the "game" component of that video game forever.

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Continued, please see EV page 10

EV*continued from page 9*

When I look at the instruction books of my 2600 games, they are all covered in scores with names next to them, our unofficial log of the "best of the best" of the time. It really makes me realize that while these games lacked the flash and fanciness of today's games, they didn't require it, because they focused on competition rather than looks. It was this competition that often bonded family members together in the 80s, through video games. And it is the same lack of such competition that alienated parents from video games beginning with the NES, because they just assumed that these new games were too advanced and lacked the fun and challenge found in games like Space Invaders or River Raid or Combat. While the games were more advanced in looks, my parents and so many others were correct in stating that these games, and most modern games, lack the challenge and fun that kept them up all night playing Space Invaders both with and without me. Games could be played by parents then, without the supervision of their kids.

I no longer wonder why parents and senators question the violence in games like Mortal Kombat. It's just not necessary. While such gore is a definite attraction for some, video games can be made without it, even realistic ones. It's been proven in the past and is true currently, but the industry too often forgets these games in pursuit of the false reality portrayed in Mortal Kombat. It may be such attempts at making video games more "realistic" that has driven many parents away from the hobby.

Please fill in this blank space with your own version of a seemingly humorous quotations gimmick, because we've chosen not to do one this issue.
Thanks for your support.

*fanzine of the Month*

Review by Jason Whitman

A Return Above & Beyond Expectations from Tommy Donoho

Above & Beyond

*Edited by Tommy Donoho*Cover Price: \$1.50Issues Reviewed: No. 3, 4 and 5Write to: 1804 Tony Lane

Wichita, KS 67212

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When all seems lost, when rebel forces seem to have succumbed to the power of the dark side, there comes a hero to save the day and defeat the empire forces.

Such may be the role of Tommy Donoho's Above & Beyond, in a time when video game fandom seems lost and dying, because we need a great young fanzine to inspire new faneds to improve and older ones to continue to write.

I would never be overconfident and suggest that Paradox once served this role in the growing world of EG fandom four years ago, but I understand how seeing a great new 'zine can increase the creative efforts of other faneds, as often happened in the young days of Paradox. Well, when I saw issue three of A&B a few months ago, I realized that fandom was far from dead, and Tommy's improvements on his young publication have been awesome and somewhat inspiring for the creation of this issue of Paradox.

When I saw issue number four, I realized that while we may have lost great publications like Fantazine, Video Apocalypse and In Between the Lines, we've gained Above & Beyond and other great 'zines like Chris Kohler's Video Zone. While I certainly miss the veterans, I am really beginning to appreciate the current greats.

Tommy has come a long way since his first fanzine, Freezing Point, which he documents in the article "Fandom & Life" in issue five. He has gone from the simplest of layouts to a wonderful new style that looks great and makes for a great read. A&B has also moved from a primarily review format to a very editorial one, a change that can only be applauded since Tommy is an opinionated, yet talented writer, a mix that keeps me listening even if I don't happen to agree with him.

Highlights of issues four and five include lots of game reviews, Tommy's take on the current state of fandom, and a truckload of fanzine reviews, which is great, because we need support from somewhere. A&B's parody of Sean Pettibone's IBTL in issue number four was both humorous and accurate, and continues to a certain degree in number five, but Tommy certainly has a voice and style of his own, which he exhibits in such articles as "AAARRRGGGHHH" (appropriately titled), in which his frustrations regarding fandom, gaming and the professional video gaming magazines are voiced.

There really aren't a lot of bad things to say about A&B. It could be a bit longer, but I wish that of all great 'zines, so I guess this too is a complement. Tommy has a lot of good material in his newest issues, and it's fun to see the growth of 'zines with such potential. Pick up some copies of one of the new greats.

The Rigors of "Alternative Publishing"

TO PUBLISH OR NOT TO PUBLISH. IS THERE ANY QUESTION?

by Jason Whitman

Paradox Head Staff

In the realm of college newspaper publishing, there exists a publication called the *Student Leader*, which gives advice about the publishing world and advertises opportunities for jobs, internships and the like.

As I was browsing through the Spring 1996 issue of this magazine, I noticed an interesting article that had relevance in our own little publishing world of video game fandom. The article, titled "Got the Publishing Bug? Think Twice Before Starting Your Own Publication," expressed sentiments that appeared counterproductive to the purpose of the magazine, to support young publishers, and angered me with its pessimism regarding the potential of amateur publications.

"Alternative" Publications

This is what the author of the piece, editor-in-chief Butch Oxendine, called amateur publications, fanzines or whatever other title you happen to use. While I cannot disagree with his assertion that fanzines and underground newspapers are alternatives to the norm (professional magazines, university-run publications), I find the negative connotations he attached to them to be very disturbing.

"While many new papers launch with a big publicity splash, most quickly pile up unpaid bills, struggle to round up new faces, and fail to interest readers," Oxendine wrote. "Only a handful of these so-called alternative publications

last past the first few issues."

Wow, and all that in the first two paragraphs. So much for supporting independent publications. While Oxendine is accurate in his statement that amateur publishing can be an expensive hobby, he failed to address the personal satisfaction that comes along with creation and self-expression, and does not seem to realize that many young editors publish with no intention of making money or even breaking even. For myself, enjoyment comes from finishing an issue and having readers appreciate my work, not from subscription money.

Investing Your Time

All faneds know that work on a fanzine or amateur publication is almost never done, because writing, reporting, gathering contributions, doing the layout and finally production and mailing can be quite difficult, especially if you're trying to keep some sort of schedule.

The beauty of fanzines, however, is that we don't have to have a schedule. If we miss an issue, it's not a problem, because we don't have advertisers and subscription holders breathing down our necks for the next issue. In fact, if anything, we have loyal readers begging us for the newest issue, inspiration not often found in the big bucks world of professional publishing.

Oxendine naturally disagreed, and stated that the rigors of such a life may just be too much for a young person in high school or college, forgetting that the beauty of such alternative publications is that they don't have to always be "on time" or bound by a set schedule.

"Even a monthly publication may require a 40-hour work week from

you to have a chance to make it," Oxendine wrote. "Being a publisher is a full-time job. Are you willing to let a paper take over your life, cut into your study time, and hamper your social life?"

"While many papers launch with a big publicity splash, most quickly pile up unpaid bills, struggle to round up new faces, and fail to interest readers."

--Butch Oxendine, Editor-in-chief, the Student Leader

Thanks for Your Support

Yes, that's part of the struggles of such a publication! Oxendine's negativity is amazing, and his failure to address the satisfaction that comes from publishing one's own newsletter or fanzine truly angers me. The *Student Leader* is a publication intended to give advice to college students interesting in creating their own publications, yet its editor-in-chief writes an article that does nothing but discourage such creation and fails to highlight any of its positive results.

"Launching a campus publication, while not impossible, will mean a tremendous amount of work, personal financial risk, and a huge chance of failure," Oxendine wrote, forgetting that from the creation of such papers comes personal satisfaction, experience with the publishing world and the tools used within it, and great possibilities for the future. What Oxendine failed to realize is that without such amateur publications, there would be no need for professional ones such as his own.

The Industry

A Tale of Two Companies That Flip=Flopped

THE RISE, FALL, AND FUTURE OF T*HQ AND ACCLAIM

by Chris Johnston

Paradox Head Staff

Once upon a time (and this reads like a story), TH*Q made bad games. And, on the other side of the spectrum, Acclaim made good games. Granted, much of Acclaim's success has to do only with ports of Midway's arcade hits, but they did very well with them. Everything from Mortal Kombat to NBA Jam and Revolution X. Now it's a little different story though. The two companies, TH*Q and Acclaim, seemed to have completely switched places and are now in two different positions. Both have changed their strategies in good and bad ways.

Acclaim was never really that good at producing games. Their first venture into the NES market, with Star Voyager, never really hit the NES community with much impact. It relied mainly on text and menial graphic elements in its presentation. From there, Acclaim went on to combine with LJN to do licensed titles, like Friday the 13th and JAWS. Those games didn't do very well, despite their licensed status. Then a stroke of luck fell upon Acclaim. They acquired the rights to do home conversions of the Double Dragon series after Tradewest lost them. That allowed them to gobble up a Midway deal, and begin producing the series of hits that made them purely infamous. Of course, I've shortened the history here for brevity's sake. They produced the wildly successful Mortal Kombat series on the Genesis and Super NES (and are now doing so on the 32-bit systems), and NBA Jam on all

of those systems, plus Revolution X. However, when Midway combined with Williams, Acclaim lost their exclusive contract to create Midway conversions. Without that power, Acclaim is attempting to ride Midway's success as long as they possibly can. NBA Jam Extreme, not created by Midway, is being done by Acclaim to put into arcades and home systems before the end of the year. The license of NBA Jam alone will not make this game a hit. Milking Mortal Kombat for all its worth with MK Duo on the PC and Saturn is also a really strange marketing tactic, with Williams releasing MK Trilogy on every major home system anyway.

Acclaim's major mistake is that they've fallen victim to the plague of the software industry: reliance on licensed properties only. If they don't wake up soon, it will kill them off quicker than you can say full motion video. Almost every one of their major releases this year are licensed properties, from Turok Dinosaur Hunter to Batman Forever and The Crow. While this is all well and good (and these games will have name recognition), it's my feeling that every company needs a good mix of original game titles. TH*Q fell into the trap of licensing years ago when the SNES first started up and only now are crawling out of its clutches.

Walking past Acclaim's booth this year was really amazing. Everything was smoke and mirrors basically. They don't have original games anymore, and that's sad. For a company that is known for Mortal Kombat, you'd think that they'd have original games, but they're caught in buzzword city and it'll take a big hit to take them out. They've

Walking past Acclaim's booth this year was really amazing. Everything was smoke and mirrors basically. They don't have original games anymore, and that's sad. For a company that is known for Mortal Kombat, you'd think that they'd have original games . . .

got several good development houses in their clutches, including Sculptured Software and Iguana, as well as the UK-based Probe Entertainment. The problem is, these companies aren't running wild with originality, but being spoon-fed licenses, and having to turn out games like WWF and Space Jam (using an engine that looks surprisingly similar to NBA Jam). In addition to that, Acclaim has been acquiring small coin-op manufacturers and game producers to do their bidding, and that's not the way it should work in this industry anymore. Take a look over at Sony's booth Acclaim. They've got it right. They've got original titles in almost every corner, and nary a licensed game. This is the way to do it these days. Even if half of your titles were original character games, or original, then that would be just fine. However, it's not that way.

Now TH*Q on the other hand, they've learned and they're getting into more and more original titles. They've still got licenses, but they're also releasing a good amount of original, fun games. Starting with getting original titles from companies like XING and Kokopeli Digital Studios. Titles to watch out for from TH*Q include In The Hunt, Alone in the Dark on Saturn and PlayStation,

Continued on the next page

Mohawk & Headphone Jack, Robo Pit, Mr. Do! (yes! finally!), Floating Runner, and K-1 Super Kick Boxer. Add to that licensed games from EA for the Game Boy and Super Nintendo, and Sim City 2000 on the SNES, and you've got an amazing lineup for the first time from TH*Q. They've still got their ever-popular Bass fishing titles for the 16-bitters and Ghost in the Shell for the PlayStation. It's amazing the transformation that this company has gone through, and I for one am happy to see them come out of the slump that they were once in.

TH*Q is doing in-house games, and obviously encouraging originality, as showcased by Robo Pit and Super Kick boxer. Gone are the days of seeing and endless array of licenses from TV and movies from TH*Q. I used to look at TH*Q like I look at Acclaim now: a company with absolutely no idea what they're doing. But, I look at it a lot differently now. Two companies that have flip-flopped. I wish TH*Q profits in the future, and I hope Acclaim can escape quickly and soon.

makes the Saturn the first set-top box to offer internet access at an affordable price.

One noticeable drawback to the Saturn was its apparent sloppy web browsing. The browser that they showed at E3 seemed to have some trouble displaying transparent gifs, and it was obvious that the resolution suffered tremendously. Whether this problem will be fixed or not before its final release remains to be seen, but Sega would benefit immensely if Netscape decided to bless the Saturn with some Navigator software. Now whether or not that can even be done (Netscape supposedly has a deal with Nintendo for their N64 internet device) remains to be seen, but even if a comparable browser can be released, it would help.

Apple's Pippin machine has Netscape, and from looking at what they had at the show, it is a more capable internet machine than the Saturn. However, what plays here is price. The Pippin is more expensive than the Saturn + NetLink package, and it will undoubtedly suffer because of that. As a dedicated game machine the Saturn has market share and the exposure to become the experimental rat that every other company will look at before making their move. This could be good for Sega by getting in the market early, or it could be bad if they do it wrong or if other companies scoop up web services for exclusive use on their systems. Unfortunately, one of the major features of the web is the ability to download information onto a storage medium such as a disk drive or hard drive system. If Sega releases a hard disk drive for the Saturn, that will open up even more possibilities for the business community to cash in on the Saturn.

Will Sega censor the Net? With all the talk about how the internet is full of porn sites and evil information (such as how to make Napalm in your kitchen sink), they'd have to do something to make guarded browsing an option, otherwise it'll be interesting to see if Senator Lieberman comes back to haunt the video game industry yet again. We've already seen what one parent can do when one person single-handedly pulled Primal Rage off of store shelves earlier this spring.

Downloadable tip resources, game walkthroughs, the possibilities of such an internet device are endless. Sony hasn't officially announced any kind of internet peripheral, but with Sega and Nintendo going after the online gold mine, I wouldn't be surprised if we hear something about such a device before the fall. Nintendo's internet plans are shrouded in a mysterious cloud of ambiguous comments and deals, including the one with Netscape to create a Nintendo 64 browser. If Netscape is working exclusively with Nintendo, that could mean bad news for Sony if they begin looking for

---THE INTERNET--- with Chris Johnston

The Dawn of the Set-Top Internet Device

The set-top internet revolution has begun. At E3, Sega introduced their NetLink peripheral, which allows Saturn owners to access the wealth of information available on the internet for a lot monthly fee. The NetLink itself is a major step towards the goal of internet access for everyone. The first step was the X-Band modem, but that didn't have the kind of speed or accessibility for internet access. At the show, there were stations inside the major companies' booths showing off their new web sites. Sony employees were even walking around the show with shirts that said 'www.sony.com' on the back. What this means is that the internet has become the new playfield for companies of all kinds to experiment and use to promote products and services.

For the first time, video game systems can be used for something other than playing games. Now, the whole online world is open to an entirely new market. It has yet to be seen whether or not internet applications can be made for the NetLink, but it would seem like a wise move for Sega and others if the capability was there to create new apps to utilize the peripheral.

Just think of video conferencing, made possible via the Saturn. It would be easier, because instead of a computer monitor the Saturn uses a television as its output device. Is it possible that eventually we'll see online gaming come to the Saturn? Sega says yes, and plans to market a networkable version of the puzzler Baku Baku later this year. Whether or not third-party companies have these kinds of networkable products in development yet remains a question, but as the NetLink gains acceptance, online gaming will surely come knocking. Even if it doesn't, the device

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a browser company to supply them with a means for surfers.

It'll be interesting to watch exactly what happens with this. As I get more information on the video game companies move into internet technology areas, I'll pass my views on it along to you.

Virtua Fighter Kids

Sega / Arcade, Saturn
by Jason Whitman

Well, somehow the fighting game trend hasn't yet died, with game manufacturers moving toward the 3D format and away from the standard SFII 2D style of before. In fact, Street Fighter Alpha 2 appears to be the last of the 2D fighters, with the three in SF3 reportedly standing for 3D.

Virtua Fighter Kids for the Saturn is no exception to this trend, yet it adds a certain something to set it apart from the norm, just as Clay Fighter did a few years ago when the various versions of SFII were hitting the home market.

This game is honestly not much more than Virtua Fighter with child characters, or actually, VF characters with children's heads, for the lower bodies appear almost the same, yet it is cute beyond all belief. While the crowd at E3 huddled around the Virtua Fighter 3 presentation, which wasn't a game but just a looping demo of computer animation, Chris and I were rocking away on this game and laughing hysterically, because it's just a lot of fun.

If you have a Saturn, you probably won't need this game, because it's really not different enough than the original VF to warrant a purchase. But if you're a new Saturn core system owner, pick this up when it comes out. It looks, sounds and plays as good as the original, but is a lot more fun.



Video Game Reviews

Over here we have 50 single women! And over here we have 50 single guys! Let's play Singled Out! Why the hell not? Or we could just read some little boxes about video games instead . . . Okay, let's go with the little boxes . . .

Wipeout XL

Psygnosis / PlayStation
by Jason Whitman

This game just flies, plain and simple. Faster, cleaner, and easier to play than the original, this sequel to one of the first PlayStation games is beautifully done, with better background graphics and cleaner animation and scaling. The speed at which this game moves is awesome, and makes the Saturn version of the original and the half-screen version of this sequel look pathetic. A game to brag about if you've got a PlayStation, but also one to play over and over, because the new levels, options and enemies will keep you busy for a while, even if you already own the original Wipeout.

Tetris Attack

Nintendo / SNES
by Jason Whitman

Even with everyone's attention on their new 64-bit powerhouse, Nintendo insisted on supporting their established platforms, something that impressed me greatly, as its competitors have failed to do so in the past. In fact, Sega has made it common practice with such add-ons and mistakes as the Sega CD, the CDX and of course, the 32X.

Well, Nintendo never fails to disappoint, as this game is a fun, competitive puzzler for the SNES. While most gamers won't even give this title a look, it's a good game for kids and those who will choose to remain faithful to the 16-bit Nintendo. A fun game with a competitive twist on the classic original.

Baku Baku

Sega / Saturn
by Jason Whitman

Somehow, even in the wake of Nintendo's awesome Super Mario 64, Sega snuck this title onto the floor of E3, and some have called it the game of the show, for while Mario looked good, it was still Mario, and this game is a mixture of something old and something new.

Baku Baku is pure puzzle game at the outset, with animal faces as the puzzle pieces instead of blocks, gems, little goober-type people, and everything else we've seen in the puzzle game genre. This game takes a turn, however, when the animal faces don't disappear as you match them up. That's because you need to match the animal with the food that it consumes, and when you do, you're granted with a "chomp chomp" as the blocks disappear and that particular animal makes a meal of your work. It sounds corny as hell, but it's fun, especially in the two-player competitive mode.

Being on CD helps this game as well, for the backgrounds and music are great on the Saturn version (Sega also showed Genesis and Game Gear versions at E3). You're also able to choose the playing level, providing some variety to the plain, redundant backgrounds of most puzzle games.

Basically, you have to play Baku Baku to really appreciate it; pictures never do games of this sort justice. If Sega can price this title on the cheaper side, it will be a great game for kids and gamers who just want a little something different for the Saturn.

Game Reviews

Donkey Kong Country 3

Nintendo / SNES
by Jason Whitman

It's really wild how times can change. Two years ago at the CES in Chicago, the first game in this series was the focus of everyone even remotely related to video games, yet at E3, a Nintendo public relations woman had to stop Chris and I from walking right past this game and physically put the controller in my hand to get us to give it a try.

There's nothing really new here except a new character to mess around with who really isn't different from the others. I want to see the SNES live on into the early existence of the Nintendo 64, but this game isn't anything special. The first two titles were fun and the graphics truly beautiful, but anything more along the same lines just seems redundant.

Tobal No. 1

Square / PlayStation
by Jason Whitman

Step right up, make another 3D fighting game! It's not as if we have enough or anything. Honestly though, Tobal looked great at E3 and has a lot of potential, especially coming from a company like Square. Any sort of special moves were still accidental or nonexistent, and each machine only had only playable level with two characters. The game was still very basic, reportedly 40 percent, with no title or character select screens.

With Toshinden 2 and Tekken 2 already coming to the PlayStation, Tobal may have a tough time reeling gamers in without a gimmick or original concept, but those of us who know the reputation of Square will definitely give this one a look when it's released.

Super Bomberman 2

Hudson Soft / SNES
by Jason Whitman

I realize that this game came out almost two years ago, but now that it's gracing clearance racks everywhere (notably Kay-Bee toy stores), it's time that everyone pick up this great multi-player cart.

As usual, the one-player mode on this game is boring and repetitive, and although the level bosses are cool and fun to battle, nothing beats perfectly throwing a bomb to trap your best friend and win the match in battle mode. In this way, Super Bomberman 2 takes on an almost SFII-type feeling, but that's the kind of competition that I've come to expect from video games since the days of the Atari 2600.

This title is easily one of the best multi-player games ever made, so pick it up at a low price with a five-player multi-tap and have your very own tournament with your buddies. Super Bomberman 2 is a classic game in my opinion and is just too cheaply available not to grace your SNES game collection.

Kirby Superstar

Nintendo / SNES
by Jason Whitman

Yet another "compilation" cart, the new fad in video gaming, but this one is quite good, with all the GameBoy Kirby games on one cartridge and in real color. Like Tetris Attack and Baku Baku, this game won't gain much attention from mainstream "gamers" but is a great title to keep the SNES alive and a fun one for the younger folk. I enjoyed it, and if Nintendo prices it right, it could be a good selling game during this upcoming Christmas season, during which the SNES it seems will be all but forgotten.

Super Mario RPG

Nintendo / SNES
by Jason Whitman

Ahh, it's Solistice on the SNES with Mario characters! Sort of, but this is actually a quality title for the SNES, not only one to keep it alive but one to keep gamers from boxing up their systems too soon before September and 64-bit Mario.

As usual, Nintendo has provided a quality product, and with the help of Square, this game actually provides a good adventure as well. The view is standard Square, 3/4 overhead, but there is a lot of action in the fight scenes, and animated interactions with Bowser and other characters are humorous.

Mario as usual has to save Princess Toadstool, but this time he has the assistance of other character that he can take along on his journey and the cool power-ups they provide. Finding these new characters and the items you need to complete the game isn't too difficult, as Nintendo seems to have set this game on a curve compatible with all players, which seems good since most younger gamers aren't into the RPG scene, as it can be somewhat complex at times.

This game is fun, and in a way never seen in the Mario series before, because the adventure builds as you play rather than being repeated in another side-scrolling level typical such games. While it can be asserted that Nintendo just threw some Mario characters and animated scenes into the now-famous Square RPG engine, the game is still fun, and as usual, Nintendo has used its magic to make it a quality cart for the SNES. While maybe not worth a purchase, Super Mario RPG is a fun game that I think a large range of game players can enjoy. Definitely worth playing for a few nights on rental.

The Industry

What a Fall! The Upcoming Gaming Season

EXPECTATIONS AND HOPES OF THE BIG NAMES IN GAMING

by Chris Johnston

Paradox Head Staff

It's an interesting time to be in video games. What with 16-bit barely hanging on for dear life, it's reminiscent of the days when 16-bit finally eclipsed 8-bit. With 16 though, it's happening at a much faster pace and the turnaround is amazing. Just a year ago Nintendo promised continued support of their 16-bit platform with Killer Instinct. What with 32-bit systems now becoming the norm, one has to wonder if it's going to slow down for a little while now.

One year ago Sega surprised almost everyone by bringing the Saturn into select retailers months ahead of its scheduled September 2nd release date. This created some major confusion and eventually went on to hurt Sega more than it helped them. Now we're finally seeing second and third generation software titles come out, and their spiral downward has turned. Sony on the other hand has always been doing quite well. Nintendo was in the background plotting world domination with their Nintendo 64 system, and seeing plans get delayed and delayed as the games were unprepared and it was evident that a simultaneous worldwide hardware launch was next to impossible to pull off.

3DO's last major title was so long ago that I can't even remember what it is. Trip Hawkins has got to be feeling some major major pressure these days. I would hate to be in his position. Maybe he'll be working for Acclaim next (little joke there). Who says the video game

industry is for kids, this is serious business, with stiff competition.

During the fall, we're going to be seeing a lot more competition from the Big 3. Sony's looking at a major influx of games, what with Tobal No. 1, Crash Bandicoot, their sports games, and TONS more. Sega's looking at many arcade conversions to hopefully save them from Nintendo's domination plans. Nintendo's got their new hardware platform to roll out, and it's going to be an uphill battle. Instead of just Sega having a lead on them, there are two companies that have a major lead in the hardware market, and what Nintendo is going to need is quality software, and fast. Mario 64 will be able to tide gamers over for a while, but that's not going to do it until Christmas. KI2 will help a little bit, because of the sheer popularity of the game with some people. The titles that they've got will be good, but they're going to have to get Starfox 64 and Mario Kart R in stores before Thanksgiving, and if possible, just after Halloween.

The unfortunate thing is that as of now, there is no pack-in game for the N64 (I keep calling it the Ultra). Even if Nintendo were to include Pilotwings in with the system, it would be better than nothing. At \$249 the N64 really isn't that much of a value. I mean, its "cheap" atmosphere is just that it's "under \$250." That doesn't cut it anymore, because you used to be able to get a system with a game packed in. The total will easily rack up to be over \$300 when gamers purchase Mario 64 or any of the other N64 titles, each priced at over \$50 a piece. Even a \$299 pack with Mario in the box would be a great help. Who cares if Nintendo didn't meet their \$249

3DO's last major title was so long ago that I can't even remember what it is. Trip Hawkins has got to be feeling some major major pressure these days. I would hate to be in his position. Maybe he'll be working for Acclaim next . . .

promise? It's close enough, and it's cheaper/equal to the other system prices when they were first released. Hey, I paid \$400 for my Saturn, which can now be had for half of that.

Come Christmastime, it's going to be a major selling season for both Sony and Sega. Nintendo may not have enough software ready by that time. Not that I doubt Nintendo's ability to get games out there, but they really didn't have that much done at E3. A handful of titles, yes, but nowhere near the amount that Sony had by Christmas last year. Third party support by Christmastime will be minimal, due to the fact that Nintendo didn't supply them with development stations in enough time. Don't even count in Turok the Dinosaur Hunter, which I think will be a poor seller on the Ultra. I don't know what leads me to believe that, but I just don't think it's got the kind of selling power that will push the system. On the other hand, MK Trilogy does have the kind of power that Nintendo can benefit from.

Sega needs to recognize the fact that arcade translations are only going to take them so far. Once everyone's played Virtua Fighter 2, VF Kids and Fighting Vipers really don't add anything new to the genre. They bought Heart of

Continued on the next page

The Life of a Fanzine

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SURVIVALIST'S CLUB

Darkness off Virgin, possibly the most original title I saw at the show for the Saturn. You can't do that forever though. It's good that Psygnosis is releasing their games on the Saturn --that has helped immensely to project the Saturn into a position where they can openly compete with the PlayStation. Nights and Sonic X-Treme are two games that will hit the home market with momentum. It depends on the hype that the press will give it, but I think Nights will do pretty well. I couldn't really judge it at the show. It's sad to see a machine that could do so well with a few side scrolling action platformers not get any. Why would Sega not use the machine in the way it was meant to be? Has 2D really fallen that badly?

Honestly, I don't see the appeal of 3D games. Sure, Mario's great. Nights and especially Sonic would make better 2D games if you ask me. Sonic X-Treme looked great, but I long for the days of side-scrollers. If Sega would make a 2D Sonic game, I'd be happy. Heck, this is coming from a big fan of Sonic. I loved Sonics 1-3 and CD. The finished product will have to something really good to impress me. Then again, I know that I'll be judging it against Mario 64, so I know it'll lose its appeal. Mario 64 is a force to be reckoned with, what with Shigeru Miyamoto at the helm. I doubt anyone can beat it. It's going to be tough anyway.

Why is Sega still even bothering developing so many Genesis games. It's foolish, and they're just wasting time that would be better spent on the Saturn. Licensees have stopped doing as many Genesis titles, why can't Sega? The bottom line is that Sega has spread their development out too thin (again), and it's going to hurt them. Finally, at the show there were no Sega CD titles announced. The system has left the building. Even more shocking was the nonchalant disappearance of the 32X. What happened there, eh?

Sony's got it made. I can't see them losing their status in the 32-bit market. They've got every base covered, but no 2D action platformers. Oh well. I'm not complaining, as they've got lots of good titles in their catalog, including Tobal No.1 and Final Fantasy VII. If they do slip, I'll be very surprised. Their games are just way too good. I don't think I saw one game that really stood out as "mediocre." Well, unless you count Bubsy 3D, but even that looks O.K. -- with some tweaking, who knows? Sports gamers are going to be loving the PlayStation. Where Nintendo has close to zero sports games for the Ultra launch (2 I think), Sony has once again devoted a major part of their lineup to sports. Which is very important. History tells us that Sega benefitted greatly from the huge amount of Electronic Arts sports games that were released on the Genesis. Sony's got SNK's lineup of arcade fighters, and Tekken 2 is just spectacular. Sony is a powerhouse to be reckoned with. The tables have been turned on Sega. Whereas once they were a major player, they're not as much anymore.

The way I look at it now, just days after the show ended, Sony is going to be the biggest force this fall, with Nintendo showing up on the scene and doing very well. Sega will struggle, but they will make it through Christmas, hopefully learning a valuable lesson and turning their development muscle from the Genesis to the Saturn. There's no point in making tons of Genesis games anymore. I mean, why isn't Vectorman on the Saturn!?

It was really easy to publish a fanzine regularly in high school, but the constraints of college have virtually killed this publication, excluding this eighteenth issue, which hopefully will not be the only one you see from us this summer.

This new layout was certainly experimental, and as I look back, it is the text-packed style that we have been famous for in the past, but I'm not sure if that's necessarily a good thing. Nevertheless, it can always change, so voice your opinions and look for changes in the future.

If we aren't lucky enough to get issue 19 in your hands, please check out the *Paradox Web*, which will have new material all the time, even when we can't get current reviews or articles in print:

<http://www.xnet.com/~wakemich/paradox.html>

Video gaming has been great for us and to us, so we're going to try to keep things going, at least for the summer, yet we've already seen delays in the publishing of this issue. But like I've said before, fanzines shouldn't be on a set schedule, and if you received this one, you'll probably receive all future issues as well.

Back issues of Paradox can be purchased through my address, which can be found on page two, so if you want to see how we started out or even how we finished before now, send a dollar for each issue you request. Also, contributions and comments are always welcome through e-mail or its ancestor, so please contribute. From the looks of this issue's review page, we need all the help we can get, because I don't fancy writing the whole thing by myself yet again.

Well, until next time, play video games just for the fun of it, express your ideas and concerns, and if you're so inclined, publish, publish, publish!

--Jason

No poet, or artist of any art, has his complete meaning alone. His significance, his appreciation is the appreciation of his relation to the dead poets and artists.

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